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THE force of regionalism and of regional consciousness in the South is less than many seem to think, whether the thinkers be Dixiecrats or literary traditionalists or Southern journalistic liberals. This part of the United States has moved farther away from Civil War patterns of thought than its own accepted spokesmen realize. In no full and real sense is there a solid South or a psychopathic South, as is sometimes assumed.

Many Southern group interests cut across regional lines and merge into national landscapes. Millionaires of Houston or Atlanta have more in common with millionaires of New York or Chicago than with CIO industrial workers of their own cities. Organized labor reciprocates with an interregional solidarity. Southern Negroes have more in common with Northern Negroes than with Dixiecrats. Southern cities join with Northern cities in tapping the Federal treasury for funds to offset their fiscal limitations. Southern physicians team up actively in the American Medical Associa-

tion to express a national professional voice on the issues of public medicine. Southern farmers likewise seek to advance their cause through a national program. The nationalizing forces do not threaten; they operate.

The observers who view regional barriers either hopefully or hopelessly as eternal might ponder the dénouement of the Dixiecratic movement. With all their manipulation of state party machinery and ballot labels, with all their stirring appeal to regional-racial pride and prejudice, the Dixiecrats in the Presidential election of 1948 polled a popular vote that was slightly less than one-fourth of the total of the eleven ex-Confederate states. Their proportion would have been smaller had the printed ballot provided opportunity to vote for Truman in Alabama, where about two-fifths of the normal electorate stayed away from the polls. The million Dixiecratic votes in 1948 fell short of Hoover's Southern following in 1928 by about twenty-five per cent, incidentally carrying no state which had bolted to Hoover.

The impact of the Dixiecrats would have been still less had it been strictly regional and racial and free from any economic attraction or ramification beyond the Mason and Dixon line. Conservative Southerners can find various ways for a coalition or entente with kindred outlanders for purposes of negation or obstruction of pending change, whether in the Eightieth Congress, the election of 1948, or the Eighty-first Congress. Politicians who look northward to Wall Street need to pull down the blinds in their glass houses as they cast regional stones at those who may be looking to places like Union Square.

It is to be noted further that the votes for the Dixiecrats in 1948 were probably, if not surely, equalled or exceeded by votes cast by Negroes in such ex-slave states as North Carolina, Virginia, Kentucky, and Texas. The few hundred thousand Negroes now voting in the South are becoming more numerous, particularly in the growing urban or industrial districts, and their weight could in time go far as an

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offset to the influence of the extreme advocates of a white-supremacy gospel. The colored voters of the region rank much higher in education and economic status than their predecessors of the eras of Reconstruction and the Populist movement. "Up from Sharecropping" would be a suitable title for a second Booker T. Washington's story of progress. This substantial advance constitutes a factor as significant as the Supreme Court decisions in explaining the Negro's gains in civil and political rights. "To him that hath shall be given."

The dynamic Negro vote of Dixie has strategic potentialities for coalition across racial and regional lines. Within the South there is a growing vote representing organized labor and its sympathizers. This vote embraces both whites and Negroes and offers support to such leaders as Frank Graham, Estes Kefauver, and Lister Hill. In the North and West there are hundreds of thousands of Negro voters who see eye to eye with their Southern fellows on many crucial issues. In the world at large there are democratic trends against the doctrine of white supremacy to provide more encouragement to the American Negroes, South and North, than to the Dixiecrats.

The new elements of the Southern electorate must reject many traditional teachings handed down by political and intellectual interpreters. The new voters object to the thesis that the South as a minority in the nation should be allowed to have its own way with its own minority. This minority of a minority is more than an abstract political question between reactionaries at home and reformers abroad. It has statistical and spiritual meanings, for it directly concerns some ten million human beings, who will increasingly have something to say about their fate. It calls for an adjustment of issues between the two enmeshed minorities, with neither the possessor of final truth. If there are undemocratic practices toward a racial minority, those practices inevitably invite the attention of all democratic groups of the country and the

world. The South cannot be left alone to solve its own problems unless it goes about the task of solving them. There can be no regional iron curtain against an incoming breeze of democratic doctrine. The breeze cannot be checked by calling it politics. The Southern Negro, especially if a voter, is learning and applying this lesson, partly through the constitutional teachings of the Supreme Court.

Articulate Negro-labor opinion of the South clashes with the idea of comparative sin. It would reject a formula which has had adherents from J. D. B. DeBow to Hodding Carter, and which provides for regional self-exoneration by pointing to outside evils and shortcomings. Certain sins are absolute, not relative or transferable. A Southern lynching is a Southern lynching, whether or not there is a riot in Detroit or Harlem. The dominant groups of a region, whether of the South or China, must bear a share of responsibility for the ills which confront them. There are limitations for buck-passing as well as for self-determination.

The New Democracy of the South is not as strong as its arithmetic. It must contend, at the outset, with an entrenched concept of conservatism. The Civil War was a conservative revolt, and coalitions of "Conservatives" overthrew Reconstruction "Radicals" to restore "home rule" in the states. Conservative leanings or motives have largely characterized the exponents and exploiters of the "Solid South" gospel, while disrespectable "radicalism" has been associated with threats to that gospel. Southern historians have performed wonders in setting forth conservative revisions of Yankee interpretations of the Civil War era. They have won a battle of words as suggested or urged by early presidents of the Southern Historical Association. The contents of the files of the Journal of Southern History show a high concentration on a fifty-year period split by the Civil War, with emphasis on the political issues of that period and a scarcity of attention to such facts and ideas as are to be found in Myrdal's "*An American Dilemma*." These learned writings, to a large

degree, tend both to reflect and to support the interlinked doctrines of regional patriotism and conservation. The Dixiecrats could find comfort in reading a number of them.

The march of the New Democracy in the South is impeded by the perpetuation of an excess weight of static ruralism in state legislatures, with a consequent and corresponding effect on the inner management of state politics. The typical legislature of the region is chiefly a body of small-town or rural Democrats, and a majority of these white men represent a minority of the population of their state, without considering the effect of any restrictions of the suffrage by which they were elected. They lack the discipline of a two-party system, or of any real party system, as V. O. Key pointedly observes in "Southern Politics."

Rural dominance or predominance in legislative representation is not peculiar to the South. It is reflected in Congress and in state law-making groups from New England to California. There are "rotten boroughs" in Connecticut as well as in Georgia. This is true because of the historical fact that the farmers and villagers got to the state legislatures or colonial assemblies first with the most representatives. The agrarian gentlemen have known how to retain their acquired power tenaciously and yield it grudgingly, whether in Up-State New York, Tidewater Virginia, or the Black Belt of Alabama. They have been masters in the art of holding the upstart cities in legislative check.

The overweight of rural power, however, seems to have a harder endurance and more significant effects in the South than elsewhere, despite the rise of cities and industrial districts in the region. The imbalance is linked with the numerical, traditional, and constitutional importance of the county as a unit of government and representation in the South. Only a small proportion of the Southern counties are urban or industrial, many of them are declining in population, and not a few of them are falling behind in the procession in economic terms for the masses. Counties or communities of bar-

ren ground, with a steady outward migration of active and productive adults, lack a full quota of those rural values and virtues which have been emphasized by many observers, including Thomas Jefferson and the literary agrarians like Donald Davidson. They are likely to contain a large proportion of frustrated individuals, including voters highly susceptible to appeals to regional and traditional prejudices. One of these voters may spell out more indirect legislative power at the state capital than three or four or more urban voters. It should be noted in passing that rural voters are prevailingly or solidly white voters.

The inequalities in state legislative apportionment, with lags in reapportionment, are chronic from the Potomac to the Rio Grande. For the lower house, in which population is generally supposed to be the measuring rod, Tennessee's ninety-five counties share an apportionment based on the United States census of 1900, and there has been no reapportionment in Alabama since 1901. Yet the constitutions of both of these states call for reapportionment by ten-year periods. Louisiana has neglected general reapportionment since its present constitution was adopted in 1921, although that document made such a step presumably mandatory after each Federal census. Georgia's 159 counties retain a distribution of seats made years ago when many of the small counties were larger and some of the large ones were smaller than today. North Carolina distributes 120 seats among 100 counties, denying no county a representative. Rural power also is strong in the upper houses.

Many large cities and new industrial areas of the South are not far from legislative disfranchisement. Jefferson County, which includes Birmingham and a sixth of Alabama's population, has only one of the state's thirty-five senators and only seven of the 106 members of the lower house. Atlanta's Fulton County, with an eighth of the Georgia population, elects one of fifty-four senators and three of more than 200 members of the state house of representatives. This

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restriction on the urban legislative voice is matched in Georgia by the county unit rule for the election of state officers and United States Senators.

There are important interests in urban-industrial centers perfectly willing to accept and continue this rural legislative supremacy, with all the corollaries of white supremacy, restricted suffrage, and a minimum response to the demands of organized labor. Urban and rural conservatives have convenient ways of getting together to support the status quo. For their purposes the small groups of rural voters and the accompanying courthouse machines may be easier to influence than the urban electorates. If votes are to be bought, the Southern rural vote is the "best buy" for its electoral weight. If voters are to be swayed by demagogic propaganda, the eroded countryside may prove most attractive.

These inequalities in the law-making process tend to perpetuate themselves. In most of the states revision of apportionment depends upon legislative action, with no constitutional recourse to compel performance. The small-county spokesmen are unsympathetic or opposed to the making of changes which may abolish their seats of power. Time increases the disproportions. Governors find it necessary to work with or through the system or see their proposals defeated. A liberal Congressman or Federal Senator may find it necessary to hedge his liberalism to avoid collision with the state forces and strategies associated with the system. In modern days the disproportionate method of representation in Southern states has become more effective than the poll tax and other voting restrictions in distorting the sampling and registering of the popular will.

The New Democracy realizes the difficulty or impossibility of taking these legislative Gibraltars of states' rights by electoral assault. It therefore seeks to by-pass them and move upon Washington for results, sometimes using spokesmen from other regions. National strategy is thus used by Southerners against regional strategy of Southerners. If the

centralists win a great victory, it will be partly because of the neglect of state responsibilities by States Rightists. In some way or manner the patterns of the past must yield to the patterns of the future.

The public and private economies of the South are too intimately linked with Federal funds to permit widespread support for a rebellious cry of "statism." The greatest gains in the individual incomes of the region for the past decade have been connected with government services and payments. An important rôle in these gains belongs to the United States Treasury, which applies no regional differentials to soldiers, veterans, postmasters, or bureaucrats. The South, with its large number of children and dependent aged in proportion to earned incomes, stands in great need of the "welfare state" and knows it. The need may be met wisely or unwisely, but it cannot be ignored. It applies to both races.

The Negro has been the "central theme of Southern history" and constitutes the chief basis for the differentials which regionalists point to. He is in the center of a woodpile of constitutional and political logic-chopping by conservatives, liberals, radicals, and others. The question of civil rights for the Negro has become a moral issue regardless of all the implications, charges, and countercharges which may be associated with the subject. A moral issue makes a good political weapon because it has simplicity and one-sidedness for purposes of argument. It also has a way of growing in importance until it is solved. Truman with Negro rights, like Lincoln with opposition to slavery, has acquired a powerful moral issue, and the Dixiecrats are ardently helping him both to use it and to keep it. No South Carolinian, even with Republican assistance, can stay the march of civil rights for all any more than Calhoun could sidetrack the movement to end slavery.

Thanks to the state legislative lopsidedness and parallel party organizational arrangements, the Dixiecrats and Neo-Dixiecrats get more appeasement than their numbers or

long-range prospects merit. By moving dramatically to the center of the regional stage, they have caused their permanent rôle to be overestimated by friends as well as critics. A frontal attack upon their positions might prove more effective than many Truman Democrats assume. It would seem that there is real opportunity for Southern liberal leaders to become bolder in attitude and action. At least there are signs pointing to such an observation.

Anti-Dixiecratic support and offerings characterized the gubernatorial campaign in 1949 by Colonel Francis Pickens Miller against the old-line Byrd machine of Virginia. This challenge, although short of success, reached substantial proportions and provided a suggestion or warning that the Old Dominion is not unalterably wedded to reaction. Governor "Big Jim" Folsom, in spite of his vulnerability to criticism, provides a check to the anti-Truman schemes and forces of Alabama. There was little comfort to Dixiecrats in Estes Kefauver's winning a Senator's seat in 1948 over the Crump machine in Tennessee. Definite anti-conservative labels are pinned on Claude Pepper, who this year is asking Florida to add another term to his fourteen years in the Senate. The appointment of Frank Graham to the Senate and a Negro to the state school board indicates that the governor's office of North Carolina is in contact with the New Democracy. The roll of liberals could be extended to other examples and to other states.

Southern liberals at Washington seek to serve their region by ironing out differentials and disadvantages through national economic legislation, while avoiding a clear crusade for Negro rights. They are strong for such proposals as Federal aid to education, housing, and welfare, for more restrictions on trusts and monopolies, for ending the basing-point price system, and for intervening in interstate gambling. For much of this legislative effort there is factual support in independent studies by Southern economists, particularly by a group working on an over-all co-opera-

tive project at Duke University. The South's economy is being pictured in its national setting.

The South's expanding crop of social scientists and social workers contains members who are carrying on teachings and activities far in advance of the views espoused by the office-holding liberals. Several of these scholars are out in front of such distinguished editors as Virginius Dabney of Richmond and Ralph McGill of Atlanta. Many, like Howard Odum of the University of North Carolina, have gone thoroughly into the field of race relations. A few are exploring or debunking claims of racial superiority and examining patterns of race relations in ways that would suit Lillian Smith. Some are suspicious or skeptical of the regional educational plan and council recently launched by the Southern governors. Among the social scientists are Negroes, including a former president of the Southern Sociological Society. In occasional bi-racial seminars and conferences of these groups of scholars a few of the roughest corners of segregation are wearing off. The Southern Historical Association, which has perhaps been the closest adherent to old ways, had new features at its annual meeting at Williamsburg last November. One item of the program was a critical paper on "The Martial Spirit of the Old South" by John Hope Franklin, Negro scholar of Howard University.

It should be borne in mind that these social teachings are like the politics of the region in diversity of view and outlook. But they are slowly bearing fruit as they touch the minds of students and readers. Ideas are weapons against prejudices, with no immunity for racial and regional prejudices. Many social-science students and others in the South are getting ideas. They are getting prepared to accept a democratic America with a little more positive faith than that of the Alabama farmer who announced to a group at a bus station on Sand Mountain in September, 1948, that he was going to vote for Thurmond but save his rabbit dog for help in a Dewey depression.